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SUBJECT: GABON: PRESIDENT BONGO ONDIMBA TRAVELING TO NEW YORK (MARCH 6-9)

¶1. (SBU) President Ali Bongo Ondimba will visit New York from March 6 to March 9 when Gabon assumes the Presidency of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). Several aides traveled to New York to advance the President's visit and Ambassador Adonia Ayebare, Africa Program Director at the International Policy Institute (IPI), visited Libreville last week to discuss programming for the President in New York. IPI will host him for two events. The first is a buffet lunch with an audience of 80-90 invitees from the U.N. missions and other foreign policy watchers, press, academics, non-governmental organizations. President Bongo Ondimba will give short remarks, launching Gabon's "theme" of conflict prevention and mitigation as a priority for its work on the UNSC. He will also field questions.

¶2. (SBU) The second event is a high-level dinner for selected members of the U.N. community including, U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki Moon, and the U.S. Mission in New York. Ban Ki Moon has confirmed his attendance, according to Ayebare. IPI also informed us that Bongo Ondimba will meet with U.S. Ambassador to the UN, Susan Rice. Bongo Ondimba also will meet with banking officials and potential investors while in New York.

¶3. (SBU) Comment: This is President Bongo Ondimba's first trip to the U.S. since his inauguration in October. Gabon is very interested in maximizing its opportunities on the UNSC and welcomes briefings on key U.N. priorities for the U.S. Bongo Ondimba also may be available for meetings in Washington after his meetings at the United Nations. End Comment.
REDDICK